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| INFO                    | LOG-00  | NP-00   | AID-00  | A-00    | CA-01   | CCO-00  | CG-00   |
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P 260751Z SEP 02  
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0753  
INFO ASEAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 004662

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: KISL, KPAO, PREL, PTER, ID  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIM LEADERS: MUCH  
HEAT, SOME LIGHT

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY: THE AMBASSADOR'S SEPTEMBER 24 DIALOGUE WITH 20 MUSLIM LEADERS REVEALED A DEEP FEELING OF WOUNDED NATIONAL PRIDE OVER THE EMBASSY CLOSURE AND RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF AL-QAIDA ACTIVITY IN INDONESIA. PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT INDONESIA IS INCREASINGLY PERCEIVED TO BE A HOTBED OF TERRORISM, AND REACTED POSITIVELY TO THE AMBASSADOR'S ASSURANCES THAT WE APPRECIATE THE TOLERANT AND MODERATE VALUES OF MOST INDONESIAN MUSLIMS. IN REPLY TO WIDESPREAD SKEPTICISM OVER AN AL-QAIDA PRESENCE AND ITS LINK TO LOCAL RADICALS, THE AMBASSADOR AFFIRMED THAT SUCH A LINK APPEARS TO EXIST AND CALLED UPON INDONESIANS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM. IRAQ AND ISRAEL WERE RAISED AS NAGGING BUT PERIPHERAL ISSUES. WHILE MANY INDONESIANS ARE STILL IN A

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STATE OF DENIAL OVER AN AL-QAIDA PRESENCE (AND, AS WE HEARD DURING THE DIALOGUE, EVEN OVER UBL AUTHORSHIP OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS), THE DIALOGUE CLEARED UP MISPERCEPTIONS AND GENERATED EXTENSIVE POSITIVE PRESS COVERAGE. END SUMMARY.

AMBASSADOR'S OPENING REMARKS  
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2. (SBU) MUHAMMADIYAH VICE CHAIRMAN DIN SYAMSUDDIN INVITED THE AMBASSADOR TO MEET WITH SENIOR MUSLIM LEADERS ON SEPTEMBER 24 TO DISCUSS TERRORISM ISSUES, THE RECENT EMBASSY CLOSURE AND PRESS REPORTS OF OMAR AL-FAROUQ REVELATIONS. LEADERS OF MAINSTREAM ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING STUDENT AND WOMEN'S GROUPS, PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSION. DIN'S PREDICTION THAT A FEW JOURNALISTS MIGHT ATTEND BELIED THE ENORMOUS PRESS FRENZY THAT ENSUED. AS DIN LED THE AMBASSADOR TO A SMALL, SECOND-FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE  
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MUHAMMADIYAH HEADQUARTERS, A DOZEN CAMERA CREWS AND SCORES MORE REPORTERS RUSHED THE ROOM AS THE AMBASSADOR TOOK HIS CHAIR. MORE THAN 50 JOURNALISTS AND CAMERA CREW MEMBERS JOCKEYED FOR POSITION IN THE TIGHTLY PACKED CONFERENCE ROOM, QUICKLY DRIVING THE TEMPERATURE NEAR THE CENTURY MARK, AND LEAVING DOZENS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE CRANING THEIR NECKS TO VIEW THE PROCEEDINGS FROM OUTSIDE. AIR FRESHENERS THAT HUNG ON STRINGS TAPED TO A NON-FUNCTIONING OVERHEAD AIR CONDITIONING VENT DANGLED LISTLESSLY IN THE STILL, SWELTERING AIR.

3. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR BEGAN BY NOTING THIS WAS THE THIRD SUCH DIALOGUE HE HAD CONDUCTED WITH MUSLIM LEADERS, AND HE AGREED WITH DIN'S REMARKS THAT DIALOGUE WAS VITAL TO PROMOTE MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING. WITH REFERENCE TO THE AL-FAROUQ PRESS REPORTS, HE REBUTTED A WIDELY HELD SUSPICION THAT THE USG HAD DELIBERATELY LEAKED THE REPORTS, STRESSING WE DO NOT PASS INTELLIGENCE REPORTS TO JOURNALISTS, NOR DO WE COMMENT ON INTELLIGENCE MATTERS. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THE GROUP TO FOCUS NOT ON THE SOURCE OF THE REPORTS BUT RATHER ON THE DISTURBING ISSUES THEY RAISE SUCH AS OUTSIDE ELEMENTS USING INDONESIA FOR EVIL PURPOSES. THE OUTSIDERS DO NOT REFLECT THE REALITY OF MODERATION, TOLERANCE AND DEMOCRACY PRACTICED BY THE MAJORITY OF INDONESIAN MUSLIMS. NOTING RECENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PRESIDENTS BUSH AND MEGAWATI, HE REAFFIRMED USG APPRECIATION AND RESPECT FOR INDONESIANS, THEIR CULTURE, AND THEIR NATION.

WOUNDED PRIDE  
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4. (SBU) AFTER THE AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS, A NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS COMPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY'S CLOSURE AND THE AL-FAROUQ PRESS REPORTS HAD DAMAGED INDONESIA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. SOME ATTRIBUTED THIS TO A PERCEIVED LACK OF EMBASSY CONSULTATION WITH THE GOI, WHILE HIDAYAT NUR WAHID, CHAIRMAN OF THE JUSTICE PARTY, BLAMED "A HIDDEN CIA AGENDA." HUSEIN OMAR OF DEWAN DAKWA ISLAMIYAH, A PREACHERS ORGANIZATION, STATED IN A VOICE QUIVERING WITH EMOTION THAT HE WAS "DEEPLY OFFENDED BY THE ILLOGICAL EMBASSY CLOSURE AND THE SIGHT OF INDONESIAN SOLDIERS STANDING WITH GUNS DRAWN READY TO SHOOT AT THE EMBASSY GATE." HE CLAIMED THE EMBASSY WAS CLOSED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH GOI OFFICIALS, AN "INSULT TO INDONESIAN MUSLIMS, OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR NATION."

5. (SBU) OTHER SPEAKERS ECHOED THESE SENTIMENTS, WITH HIDAYAT NUR WAHID CLAIMING THAT USG ACTIONS HAVE MADE INDONESIA LOOK LIKE A "SECOND RATE COUNTRY WHICH CAN'T MAINTAIN SECURITY." "IF WE ARE FRIENDS AS YOU SAY," HE ASKED, "WHY WAS THERE NO COMMUNICATION PRIOR TO THE EMBASSY CLOSURE AND THE REPORT OF THREATS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICANS IN YOGYAKARTA?" NOTING THAT MANY U.S. EMBASSIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAD ALSO BEEN CLOSED, THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOI. THE EMBASSY CLOSURE SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN INSULT OR A REFLECTION ON THE GOI, BUT RATHER A PRUDENT MEASURE TO PROTECT THE SAFETY OF EMBASSY EMPLOYEES.

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0754  
INFO ASEAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
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WHO IS A TERRORIST, WHO IS A MODERATE?  
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6. (SBU) SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM OVER AN AL-QAIDA PRESENCE IN INDONESIA, AND ONE CLAIMED THAT AL-FAROUQ WAS A "CIA SPY." OTHERS STATED FLATLY THAT GROUPS SUCH AS LASKAR JIHAD, THE INDONESIAN MUJAHIDEEN COUNCIL (MMI), AND THE ISLAMIC DEFENDER'S FRONT (FPI) WERE NOT TERRORIST GROUPS, AND EXPRESSED ANGER THAT THE PRESS WAS BRANDING INDONESIA A HAVEN FOR TERRORISTS. DIN SUMMARIZED THESE REMARKS BY ASKING WHETHER AL-QAIDA AND "NATIONAL TERRORISTS" WERE LINKED AND WHETHER THE USG CONSIDERED THE ABOVE-NAMED GROUPS TO BE TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS.

7. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT, SADLY, THERE IS LINKAGE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF AL-QAIDA ACTIVITY NOT ONLY IN INDONESIA BUT ELSEWHERE. CITING THE RECENT ARREST OF SUSPECTED TERROR CELL MEMBERS IN THE U.S. AND IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE GOAL OF AL-QAIDA WAS TO INFILTRATE AND SUBVERT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WHEN THE USG RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH ACTIVITIES, "WE SHARE IT WITH FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS LIKE YOURS, JUST AS WE HOPE INDONESIA WILL SHARE INFORMATION WITH US." WITH REFERENCE TO THE SPECIFIC GROUPS, THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT THE USG HAS A PROCESS BY WHICH WE DESIGNATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, AND AT PRESENT THESE GROUPS HAVE NOT BEEN DESIGNATED AS SUCH YET. HOWEVER, HE ASKED THE PARTICIPANTS TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF LINKAGE BETWEEN AN AL-QAIDA PRESENCE IN INDONESIA AND LOCAL RADICALS, SAYING THAT A LASTING SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM COULD ONLY COME FROM

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INDONESIANS THEMSELVES.

8. (SBU) DIN STATED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE TO HEAR THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY AND THE ENTIRE USG BELIEVED THAT ISLAM, AS PRACTICED IN INDONESIA, WAS "MODERATE ISLAM" AS OPPOSED TO "TERRORIST ISLAM." THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED THE GROUP THAT THE USG HAS LONG REGARDED INDONESIAN MUSLIMS AS MODERATE, AND THAT WE APPRECIATED THEIR VALUES OF TOLERANCE AND OPENNESS.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT (OR SO WE THOUGHT)  
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9. (SBU) A QUARTER OF THE PARTICIPANTS OPINED THAT THERE WAS NO PROOF OF UBL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS. THE WILDLY GESTICULATING REPRESENTATIVE OF AL-IRSYAD, INDONESIA'S FOURTH LARGEST AND MOST RADICAL MASS ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION, REPEATED THE STALE RUMOR THAT THOUSANDS OF JEWS DID NOT APPEAR FOR WORK AT THE WTC. ANOTHER PARTICIPANT RESURRECTED THE PRESIDENT'S "CRUSADE" REMARK AS PROOF THAT THE WAR ON TERROR IS IN FACT A WAR ON ISLAM. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED BY REFERRING TO THE NUMEROUS VIDEOTAPES IN WHICH UBL AND SOME OF THE HIJACKERS EITHER DISCUSS PLANS FOR OR GLOAT OVER THE ATTACKS. HE DISMISSED THE RUMOR AS FALSE, CALLING IT AN INSULT TO THOSE WHO PERISHED. SHORTLY AFTER THE AMBASSADOR CITED THE INCRIMINATING UBL VIDEOTAPES, YET ANOTHER SPEAKER REPEATED THE ALLEGATION OF NO PROOF OF UBL INVOLVEMENT.

DIALOGUE VS. "DIPLOMACY OF ANGER"  
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10. (SBU) AHMAD BAGJA, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF NAHDLATUL ULAMA, INDONESIA'S LARGEST MASS ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION, EARNED A ROUND OF APPLAUSE WHEN HE STATED THAT THE U.S. AND INDONESIA MUST CONTINUE A DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO SOLVE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS SUCH AS TERRORISM AND TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE RELATIONSHIP. HIDAYAT NUR WAHID TOOK A LESS CHARITABLE VIEW, SAYING THAT DIALOGUE IS ALL WELL AND GOOD BUT NOTHING HAS COME OUT OF IT. HE ALSO WONDERED WHETHER THE USG WAS SIDING WITH SEPARATISTS IN IRIAN JAYA AND ACEH, A POINT THE AMBASSADOR FIRMLY REBUTTED. A WOMAN REPRESENTING WANITA ISLAM, AN ISLAMIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION, SAID SHE HAD LIVED IN THE U.S. FOR FOUR YEARS "AND CRIED WHEN KENNEDY WAS KILLED," BUT CLAIMED THAT SHE NO LONGER FELT GREAT AFFINITY FOR THE U.S. BECAUSE "AMERICA HAS CHANGED." A LEADER OF THE INDONESIAN MUSLIM

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INTELLECTUALS UNION (ICMI), AN ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED DURING THE LATTER YEARS OF THE SOEHARTO ERA, CLAIMED THAT WE HAVE PURSUED A "DIPLOMACY OF ANGER" SINCE SEPTEMBER 11 AND WE NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIM CULTURE. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED BY NOTING THE VARIOUS OUTREACH PROGRAMS THE MISSION HAS UNDERTAKEN OVER THE PAST YEAR SUCH AS VISITS TO THE U.S. BY LEADERS OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS.

IRAQ AND ISRAEL

11. (SBU) MOST OF THE DISCUSSION INVOLVED DOMESTIC ISSUES, A REFLECTION OF INDONESIA'S LARGELY INSULAR FOCUS. HOWEVER,

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0755

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MANY SPEAKERS MADE CUTTING REMARKS REGARDING IRAQ AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SITUATION IN PASSING. ON IRAQ, SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS BEMOANED THE PROSPECT OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE EVENT OF WAR. WHILE PASSING WADS OF KLEENEX TO SWEAT-DRENCHED CAMERAMEN STANDING BEHIND HIM, HIDAYAT NUR WAHID COMPLAINED OF A PERCEIVED USG DOUBLE STANDARD TOWARD IRAQ AND ISRAEL, PARTICULARLY ON THE ISSUE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. CRITICISM OF ISRAEL WAS FAR MORE HEATED, WITH EQUAL CRITICISM OF THE USG FOR "DOING NOTHING" WHILE ISRAEL KILLS PALESTINIANS. A BATIK-CLAD LEADER OF KAMI, A STUDENT ORGANIZATION AFFILIATED WITH THE JUSTICE PARTY, DUBBED ISRAEL "A TERRORIST STATE" AND ANOTHER SPEAKER PREDICTED THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE WORLD TERRORISM UNTIL A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS REACHED. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE U.S. IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON IRAQ

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STRESSING THAT NO FINAL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN. ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SITUATION, HE READ A LENGTHY EXCERPT OF THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON'S 9/23 PRESS BRIEFING.

COMMENT  
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12. (SBU) THE DIALOGUE PRODUCED MUCH HEAT (DUE LESS TO  
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IMPASSIONED PARTICIPANT ORATION THAN TO THE CRAMMED AND STIFLINGLY HOT VENUE) BUT ALSO SOME LIGHT JUDGING FROM THE NUMEROUS LOCAL PRESS REPORTS ON THE EVENT, WE MADE PROGRESS IN SENSITIZING SOME INDONESIANS TO THE EXISTENCE OF AN AL-QAIDA PRESENCE HERE AND THE DANGER IT POSES: MOST MAJOR  
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PRESS ACCOUNTS FEATURED THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT THAT THERE ARE TERRORIST CELLS IN INDONESIA. WE ALSO TOOK AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD UNDERCUTTING THE ABSURD BUT CIRCULATING NOTION THAT THE AL-FAROUQ PRESS REPORTS ARE PART OF A USG "BLACK PROPAGANDA PLOT" TO DEFAME INDONESIA, AND TOWARD REASSURING INDONESIAN MUSLIMS THAT WE DO NOT CONSIDER THEIR COUNTRY A "TERRORIST NATION." HOWEVER, WE REALIZE THE STATE OF DENIAL REGARDING THE AL-FAROUQ REVELATIONS IS DEEP AND WIDESPREAD: AS THE LINGERING DOUBTS AMONG SOME PARTICIPANTS ABOUT UBL 9/11 AUTHORSHIP ATTEST, THE PASSAGE FROM DENIAL TO REALIZATION AND CORRECTIVE ACTION WILL BE SLOW. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE SENSE OF MUTUAL GOODWILL THAT HAS SURROUNDED OUR THREE DIALOGUES, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN MORE SUCH DIALOGUES IN THE FUTURE

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